

## FURTHER ADDITIONS TO THE BIRD FAUNA OF RWANDA

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Since 1969 I have lived in Kigali, Rwanda and have been able to spend considerable time in the field. As many parts of the country, especially the eastern rangelands and the Akagera National Park, had been subject to only limited ornithological investigation before that time, I have been able to identify a large number of species which were absent from the check-list of Schouteden (1966). Many of these new records have already been published in miscellaneous papers. The latest additions are given below.

*Circaetus gallicus* Short-toed Snake Eagle

The race *pectoralis* (the Black-chested Snake Eagle) is a breeding resident in the eastern rangelands of Rwanda, but on 3 December 1983 I watched an immature bird of the western race *beaudouini* (Beaudouin's Snake Eagle) in the Kilala plain, Akagera NP. The bird was sitting on the top of a small isolated tree and could be seen from a considerable distance because of its prominent whitish head. At close range the entire head and underside looked white with a slight buffish tinge. On the belly, especially on the sides, there were some dark markings and the neck was also a mixture of white and dark feathers. The mantle and wings were light brown, much paler than in the local race *pectoralis*, and with a slight rufous tinge.

*Butastur rufipennis* Grasshopper Buzzard

On 7 November 1981 I watched a single adult bird in the Kamakaba plain in the northern part of the Akagera NP. It was sitting on a very small termite mound in the grass and, in my car, I could approach it to within a few metres. The plumage looked in good condition, but when the bird flew away low over the ground, its flight was lop-sided and looked as if it was wounded in one wing. This record is about 150 km to the south of the southernmost record from the Rwenzori NP in Uganda (Britton 1980), but most surprising is its early date.

*Falco eleonorae* Eleonora's Falcon

On 24 January 1983 a single pale phase bird was flying south along the Akagera swamps near Kajumbura, Akagera NP. It looked at first like a large Hobby *Falco subbuteo*, but with a longer tail and long narrow wings (especially the arm wing). Its flight was very typical of this species, with slow and rather graceful wingbeats. At close range the underside appeared more buffish than that of the Hobby and the undertail coverts looked pale. The underwing was dark on the coverts, pale at the base of the flight feathers and dark again at the posterior edge.

*Francolinus shelleyi* Shelley's Francolin

The first time I came upon a covey of four birds of this species in the Akagera NP and was able to identify them with certainty, was on 10 September 1975. Since that time I have made several sightings each year, but most of my records concern birds heard in the early morning or at dusk. A bird was also seen by D.A. Turner (pers. comm.) on 9 July 1981.

I found this francolin over a large part of the Akagera NP and in the central area of the Mutara Game Reserve, up to 1.15S in the north and 30.21E in the west. I also found it further south, near the Rusuma Falls at 2.24S, 30.16E, near the Tanzanian border in extreme southeast Rwanda. Within that area this species has a very sporadic distribution. I found it on stony hills with *Loudetia simplex* grasslands and scattered combretaceous bushes or trees between 1400 and 1750 m above sea level. I found it also in the very open

*Themeda-Hyparrhenia* grasslands of the higher plateaux in the central areas of the Akagera NP at between 1500 and 1825 m.

Over nearly all of its distribution area in eastern Rwanda this francolin is sympatric with the Red-winged Francolin *F. levillantii*, which is far more numerous. Shelley's Francolin keeps more to rocky or stony places with less luxuriant grass cover, but with a quite dense woody vegetation, while the Red-winged is most abundant in very open lush, long grasses or on the shorter grasslands of the central plateau of the Akagera NP. Their ecological separation, however, is not complete and in some areas both species occur on exactly the same ground. On the other hand, the Red-winged Francolin completely avoids the driest parts of Akagera NP while it extends its range on to the mountain grasslands of the high rainfall areas of western and northern Rwanda.

The discovery of this Rwandan population of Shelley's Francolin gives more support to the isolated single record (of three birds) from southern Uganda (Britton 1980). Obviously this Rwanda population extends into the Ankole region, and perhaps also to the other side of the Akagera River in Karagwe, extreme northwestern Tanzania.

*Francolinus streptophorus* Ring-necked Francolin

On 29 September 1980, on the ridge of Kiyonza Hill in the southern part of the Akagera NP, I flushed two francolins which I had never seen before in Rwanda. Subsequently I came upon these birds several times, but until July 1981 I was unable to identify them with certainty. Finally I had good views of a single bird, calling from a stone on 6 July 1981, and was able to identify it as a Ring-necked Francolin. A few days later, on 11 July, D.A. Turner (pers. comm.) also had good views of a single bird about 3 km north of Akagera Hotel, and flushed two more later on the same day. Since that time I have seen this species regularly.

The distribution of the Ring-necked Francolin appears to be restricted in Akagera NP to Kiyonza Hill, a steep stony ridge about 12 km long and a few hundred metres wide. The centre of this area is at about 1.40S, 30.43E. Curiously, the species is totally absent from many other similar hills north and south of Kiyonza. Its habitat is a *Loudetia* grassland, interspersed with many stones and rock outcrops, and with quite a dense woody cover of isolated combretaceous bushes and small trees or dry thickets, situated at about 1500 m.

On the same hill and in the same habitat I have also seen Shelley's Francolin, the Coqui Francolin *F. coqui*, the Red-necked Spurfowl *F. afer* and, very rarely rarely, the Red-winged Francolin. The Ring-necked Francolin usually occurs in isolated pairs or in small coveys of up to six birds. When approached on foot, it remains very quiet and can only be flushed once, usually from about five or six metres.

*Numenius arquata* Curlew

On 28 December 1981 a single bird was found on a small rocky island in a bay of Lake Kivu near Kibogora, between Kibuye and Cyangugu. This is the first record for Rwanda, but the species is an annual visitor to the Rusizi Plain on the Zaire-Burundi border (pers. obs., Gaugris 1979).

*Sterna caspia* Caspian Tern

A single bird was observed on about 1 November 1981 by N. Monfort-Braham, K. Stuart and A. Harcourt on Lake Hago, Akagera NP (pers. comm.).

*Glaucidium capense* Barred Owlet

On 31 August 1981 a bird of this species was found sitting in the crown of a leafless tree on the edge of a narrow dry gully thicket, being mobbed by

small passerines, at Kitabiri Hill in the Akagera NP. It looked decidedly larger than the Pearl-spotted Owlet *G. perlatum*, and its barred upperside and breast were conspicuous.

Since that time I have tried to find the species again in the same general area by playing-back its recorded voice at night. This method is very successful with other species of the same genus and always results in a rapid response when the target species is present in the area. The fact that I have never obtained any response with *capense* is, in my opinion, an indication that this species is not a resident in eastern Rwanda.

*Andropadus virens* Little Greenbul

On 28 August 1982 I found this species in a small but dense patch of riverine forest along the Akagera, about 2 km south of Kagitumba in the extreme north of Akagera NP. At least four different birds were seen. They were members of a mixed party involving Yellow-whiskered Greenbuls *A. latirostris*, Leaf-loves *Phyllastrephus scandens* and Olive Mountain Greenbuls *P. placidus* among many other passerines. This is my first record from Rwanda, but I know the species very well from eastern Zaire.

*Ficedula albicollis* Collared Flycatcher

This species is a common and sometimes abundant migrant in eastern Rwanda from mid September to early November. Most of the birds are then in winter plumage and their racial identification is not possible. Britton (1980a) refers to my paper on Palaearctic migrants in Rwanda (Vande weghe 1979) and reports that the nominate race is "common on autumn passage". This is a misinterpretation, for I did not write about racial identification in that paper. I stated that the first arrivals include some males still carrying extensive remnants of summer plumage, and in fact the only bird of whose racial identification I am sure was a nominate male, seen on 26 September 1980 on Kiyonza Hill in the Akagera NP. Another male of the nominate race was seen on 5 October 1978 near Kigwena in southern Burundi. This bird was mentioned, without subspecific quotation, in a paper on birds of Burundi (Gaugris et al. 1981).

Spring migration is much more discrete. In dry years there are usually no records at all, but in wet years (e.g. 1971, 1978, 1983 and 1984) I have made sightings over several days in mid March. Among these birds some are already in breeding plumage and racially identifiable. The birds seen on 14 March 1971 and on 13 March 1978 (Vande weghe 1979) were most probably *semitorquata*, but two or three males seen between 14 and 21 March 1984 in gardens in Kigali were definitely of this race.

*Nectarinia pulchella* Beautiful Sunbird

On 21 August 1981 I watched a pair about 3 km south of Kagitumba (Uganda border) in the extreme north of the Akagera NP. The birds were actively flying around and displaying in open *Acacia polyacantha* woodland close to the river. The male had elongated tail feathers and yellow pectoral tufts, but was not in full breeding plumage. The red breast patch showed some dull feathers, as did the metallic green of the head and mantle. The belly was greenish and the bird obviously belonged to the nominate race. As this sunbird has been found in Ankole, Uganda (Britton 1980), its occurrence in northeastern Rwanda is not too surprising; but as I have seen it only once in 15 years, it must be extremely rare or perhaps only a straggler.

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## XIX CONGRESSUS INTERNATIONALIS ORNITHOLOGICUS

### Second Announcement

The XIX International Ornithological Congress will take place in Ottawa, Canada, from 22 to 29 June 1986. Prof. Dr Klaus Immelmann (West Germany) is President and Dr Henri Ouellet (Canada) is Secretary General. The programme is being planned by an international Scientific Programme Committee chaired by Prof. J. Bruce Falls (Canada). The programme will include plenary lectures, symposia, contributed papers (spoken and posters), and films. There will be a mid-congress free day. Pre- and post-congress excursions and workshops are planned in various interesting ornithological regions of Canada.

Information and requests for application forms should be addressed to:

Dr Henri Ouellet  
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XIX Congressus Internationalis Ornithologicus  
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Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0M8

'Pre-registration' should be made by 30 November 1984.